

# Christianity and Crisis

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## Which Question Comes First for the Church?

**I**N both the religious and the secular world the question "What shall we do?" is raised with an urgency which sometimes rises to the pitch of hysteria. Its immediate forms are two: What shall we do about our relations with Russia? and What shall we do about the atomic bomb? These are important questions and must be answered. The fate of our civilization depends upon them. If relations with Russia continue to deteriorate, the mutual mistrust between the great centers of power may vitiate the hoped for efficacy of the United Nations Charter and make that instrument irrelevant. If a solution for the problem of the atomic bomb is not found, the war which we will have failed to avert will most certainly destroy the last remnants of civilization. The moral-political issues which we face are, in other words, of unparalleled urgency.

Despite that fact, the first business of the Christian church is not to find an answer to those questions. Its first business is to raise and answer religious questions within the framework of which these moral issues must be solved. Our generation is in a religious, as well as moral and political, confusion because the ultimate religious question: What does life mean? has been falsely solved. We thought that life's meaning was guaranteed by the historical process. We believed in progress. Now we find that an atomic bomb stands at the end of the technical development. And at the end of the hoped for rational-moral progress we find little statesmen, representing little nations, drawing pretensions of omniscience from their military omnipotence, and playing with the powder which might blow up the world.

If we ask the question about the meaning of our existence, we must include in it the datum that we are unable to give a clear and decisive answer to the moral question: What shall we do? Not even the church, and perhaps least of all the church, can give a definitive answer to that question. Already sentiment in the church is divided between those who think we must first of all defend a "Christian civilization," and those who think we ought to make every possible sacrifice, even of Christian values, for the sake of an accord with Russia. A conference of international idealists recently met in Dublin, New

Hampshire, and immediately divided into two groups. One group called for a world government, but did not suggest how we are to achieve it from the present position of international mistrust. The other group called for an alliance of democratic states, which means, for an anti-Russian alliance. The conference thus presented the nation with the alternative of an impossible solution on the one hand, and an irresponsible one on the other. We can do better than this conference. But a part of the tragedy of our situation consists in the fact that there is no clear way out of the present *impasse*.

We can also do better on the problem of the atomic bomb than the present May Bill before Congress. That bill practically guarantees that we will enter an armament race on the atomic bomb issue. We had better do what we can to kill that bill. But there is still no clear and obvious method of solving the problem of the bomb; and certainly not an unmistakable "Christian answer" for this issue.

There is meanwhile a very great task for the church to help people to live sanely in a very insecure world. A religious faith which trusts no historic securities too much, but understands the ultimate security of the assurance that "neither life nor death—are able to separate us from the love of God" can become a resource of sanity in an insecure world. A religious faith which understands the perpetual disappointments in human history and knows that no historical achievement can be identified with the Kingdom of God, can prevent the disillusionment, bordering upon despair, which those feel who had expected the post-war world to be at least the vestibule of the Kingdom of God.

A religious faith which prompts us to live our life in obedience to God, and to recognize the self-justifying character of the sacrifice which such obedience may require, will not become involved in the hysterical conclusion that the sacrifices of the men who died upon the fields of battle have been in vain, if we fail now to achieve a world government. "Sufficient unto the day are the evils thereof." These men made their sacrifices, facing a horrible evil of their day. They destroyed that evil. New evils and

new possibilities of world anarchy are arising, which may mean that, in terms of history, their sacrifices have only negative, and therefore only tragic, justification. But in God's sight these sacrifices have a more absolute justification.

It is, in other words, not possible to work sanely upon historical tasks, with a religion which confines the meaning of human existence to the limits of historic achievements and frustrations. From such religions spring the alternate evils of "sleep and drunkenness," which is to say, of complacency and hysteria. "Those that sleep, sleep in the night and they that are drunken are drunken in the night" declares St. Paul, but "let us who are of the day watch and be sober."

R. N.

## Editorial Notes

The Poles have been burning synagogues. The Czechs are celebrating their emancipation by refusing to make any distinction between loyal and disloyal Germans in the Sudeten territory. All of them are being uprooted and sent across the border where they swell the mass of misery, caused by the forcible migration of millions of Germans into a homeland which lies physically and economically bankrupt. There is no more dismal quality in human nature than vindictive passion. Before the winter is over, the conscience of the West will be revolted by the misery in both Europe and Japan. Our uneasy conscience about what we have done, and are doing, will cause us to question the righteousness of the cause which prompted our battles. We were indeed the executors of divine judgment in standing against the Nazi barbarism. But we have forgotten what Christians ought to know: That the righteousness and justice of men and of nations is short range. Victors cover themselves so easily and quickly with new guilt. They do so partly because they exact justice without "fear and trembling." They forget that their own justice is partial and must not be equated with divine justice.

One reason why the victors have so much difficulty achieving justice is because they think it possible to overcome the evil the foe committed by the rigor of their punishment. Actually there is always the danger that punishment, proportionate to the crime, will perpetuate the crime in the punishment. There is a negative therapeutic value in punishment; but it lacks every positive resource for new health. Redemption comes through forgiveness and not through punishment.

Soon the trials in Nuremberg will begin. In order to catch as many Nazis as possible, we decided to try them not only for the most outrageous crimes against common standards of humanity, but to accuse them also of being instigators of an aggressive war. So they were. But we have no organized world community; and we had none when the war broke out. We may have our own opinion about the identity of "aggressors"; but we cannot deny that wars, in an unorganized world, are expressions of the world's anarchy. And that, in the absence of a world court, there is an element of pertension in the effort of the victors to define aggression, to identify the aggressor and to declare this aggression to be an *ex post facto* crime.

We are told that we are doing this to teach the Germans the majesty of the law. No illusion could be more futile than this. The laws which victors make *ad hoc* lack the majesty of universally accepted laws. More Germans are guilty of obvious crimes against humanity than we can possibly execute. Why then do we add this extra burden, and why do we involve ourselves in this patent pretension? Because we think that rigorous punishment will help redeem the Germans, and also because we lack a proper reverence for the "vengeance of the Lord" which has already overtaken the Germans in their defeat, and in the total physical, economic and political bankruptcy of their nation.

The French elections have resulted in the emergence of three parties of almost equal strength, the communists, the socialist and the new Popular Republican Movement. The latter party is a fruit of the resistance movement, being Catholic but also radical in economic program. The election gave de Gaulle strong support in his effort to achieve a new constitution which would avoid the instability of the parliamentary system of the third republic. It remains to be seen whether the election also provides for a core of real unity in France which would make a healthy democratic regime possible. The co-operation between the radical Catholics and socialists behind de Gaulle ostensibly creates this core of unity. There are some who question the stability of this new alliance however, partly because most of the French conservatives voted for the new Catholic party in the hope that it would not be as radical as its program; and partly because the question of secular and religious schools may prevent a permanent alliance between Catholics and socialists.

R. N.

# Did Hitler Win?

By A PROTESTANT CHAPLAIN

**H**ITLER set out to annihilate the Jewish people, and he very nearly accomplished his purpose. By means of the most expert slaughter system ever used against human beings, he has reduced the European Jewish population that came under his control from 7,000,000 to 40,000, according to most recent estimates. Certainly that accomplishment was near enough to 100% achievement to be hailed by fervent anti-Semites as an astounding victory.

An allied victory, however, did halt the Nazi death factories short of their intended goal (though just barely). There are still some Jews left. But even against this remnant Hitler seems to have won the other aspect of his fight—he has alienated them from the heart of the world. It seems incredible but it is all too true—no one wants these homeless survivors of the Nazi beastiality. For years now, in righteous Christian indignation, we have “preached deliverance of the captives,” and at last we have “set at liberty them that are bruised.” Now, with indifferent heartlessness, we condemn these same people to the impossible exile of homelessness. “Oh, send them back to the countries from which Hitler took them!” someone says. In some cases that might work. French Jews, if there be any left, could no doubt return to their country in safety. But to send the Jews back to many of these European countries would be like rescuing a man from a den of lions and then making him take refuge in a cave infested by cobras, for anti-Semitism is apparently even more virulent than ever. As I write this there comes a radio report that Poles in Krakow have burned a synagogue and that many Jews have been killed in fresh outbreaks. Another indication of what is in store for the Jewish people is given in the abuse they suffer in the D.P. camps, even in American territory, at the hands of other D.P.’s. On August 14 an American official of UNRRA charged, for example, that “the Polish camp leader at Valterdigen was making life miserable for Jews by anti-Semitic activities.” We are children uninitiated in social psychology and in the reality of post-war Europe if we think that we have downed the persecution of the Jews by defeating Hitler and destroying the Nazi party. Central Europe is not redeemed from anti-Semitism, and the Jews should not be condemned to remain therein.

But where will they go? Christian America is horrified at the very thought of revising immigration quotas, with many lesser nations copying her attitude. As a result, no nation of any consequence is stepping forward with a hospitable invitation to settle. Had the Balfour Declaration, agreed upon

in good faith by the victorious allies after the last war, been carried out, these people could look forward to a home and a new start in Palestine. But the mighty British lion has been afraid that a few Arab politicians might make trouble—or something. Now these people are squatting in Germany, generally treated like the rest of the D.P.s. even though many of the latter willingly came to Germany to work in the Nazi war machine, threatened with return to hostile countries, given haphazard relief while a politically hamstrung UNRRA tries to make up its mind whether they are entitled to help or not (International Red Cross has been shoved aside, and even the Jewish relief organization has been refused permission to minister to these survivors), and argued over by the victorious powers. The European war ended three-and-one-half months ago, and these children of suffering are still suffering. Are we Christians or are we international politicians first?

I have tried to understand how a victory in which my America played so commanding a role could still leave these tragic people so abandoned. I have watched American army officers of Jewish background nearly beside themselves with compassion, shame, anger, and frustration at what they have seen, and heard, and I have wondered why the rest of us care so little. I believe that it is because we do not know the people. We were shocked and sickened by the terrible cruelty of the Nazi horror camps, and it seemed that at last we had awakened. But then we dissipated our moral indignation in an adolescent attempt to be “tough” with the Germans. We tried to implement this idea in a sweeping non-fraternization policy that was non-selective and entirely negative. It didn’t work. By that time our moral indignation had run low. You see, we put all our emphasis on the fact that Germans were a cruel people. Though the German people did produce an amazing amount of cruelty, that generality was too indiscriminate to stand. We were ignoring the individual, and only alienating many potential allies among the German populace, as well as losing the respect of our own men by our official stupidity. Meanwhile, having directed our emotional powers into an attempted hatred of a whole race of Germans for persecuting a whole race of Jews, we now have too little emotional power left to single out the individual survivors of the horrors and love them as brothers. In our occupation we have followed no clear cut philosophy based on our historic national principles, and we have lost the individual in generalities. America needs to meet these individuals



who have endured and survived the lethal tortures of Nazi inhumanity and who are now enduring the hopelessness of our dallying with the question, "Just how Christian can we afford to be with these people?"

Perhaps we should not be too harsh with ourselves for losing sight of the individual sufferer. The methods of torture and murder were so fiendishly devised and the numbers who fell under those methods so fantastically large, that we were halted in a fascinated stupor before the gas chambers and flesh hooks, were confused by the blur of writhing millions, and were bewildered by the undistinguishable groanings of huge masses. It was impossible to give a name to each naked body and to each despairing cry. We shuddered at so great a suffering. But one can soon stop shuddering if the suffering remains a nameless mass. The shuddering becomes a resolute compassionate ministry of love only when that suffering is broken down for us into Marys and Johns and Abrahams and Rebeccas.

I could give many interesting illustrations of the suffering of the Jews. Let me confine myself to only two illustrations—one of a Jewish Chaplain in the American Army who lost all of his family in the Nazi plague, and one about Leon and his mother.

The chaplain knows very little about what happened, but he does know how his father died. He was shot by the SS, but not fatally. Dumped into a grave, he was half buried alive when he begged for another show. I did not have the heart to ask the chaplain if the request was granted. I am worried for the well-being of this chaplain. Weighed down by his own personal grief, pressed in from every side by the tragedy and suffering of his people, and completely frustrated by the odd attitude of the nation in whose army he serves, he is a living cry of pain. In the middle of his services the thing overwhelms him and he weeps. There is no peace for him, no satisfaction in the end of a world war, no victory to be celebrated. His is the hurt of hopelessness. It is his lot to live in a world dominated by Christian powers.

Someone brought over Leon, a soft-eyed and gangling blond boy, the kind of a child that many of us service men are hoping to return to before long and envelop in paternal embraces. "Here is a rare thing," said the chaplain, "a Jewish child." I was startled, even as I loved the boy. Why, children were the most common phenomena which we found in strife torn Europe. No matter how battered the city, how few the young men, kids seem to squirt out from the cracks in the masonry when one drove through. But he was right—there were almost no children among these refugees. Jewish children have been either gassed, unborn, or unconceived. They just aren't.

This lad was alive only because a kindly Ukrainian gentile had taken him and loved him as his own, while his mother clung to life in a concentration camp. By one of those happy coincidences that seem tinged with the mercy of God, the mother and son were reunited after her liberation.

The magnitude of their suffering has been terrific. The chaplain's father, Leon's mother, and the thousands of others have survived a hell beyond our imagination and comprehension, and yet they are less wanted than the broken down tanks which we are carefully gathering up all over Germany, repairing and sheltering against the weather like beloved old pensioners.

Before we left the refugees, they sang the "Song of Buchenwald" for us. I was tremendously moved by the music of the song and the spirit of the singers, but not until I had the words translated did I realize what I had experienced. Here was a song born directly from the anguish and despair of Buchenwald, and expressing a courage that was the imperishable will to live of a wondrous people.

## Beyond Indignation

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

INDIGNATION is a good weapon for destruction. And there are many things and many institutions which ought to be destroyed. The literature of indignation has done yeoman service in many a fight against intolerable evils. Perhaps the most famous American example is Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. No history of the struggle against slavery is complete without the telling of the tale of its powerful influence. Jacob Riis' books, *How the Other Half Lives*, *The Battle With the Slums*, and others had their own great share in the struggle with evil conditions in New York City. In our own time the literature of indignation has become a vast and many-sided achievement. The merciless analysis of angry eyes has been applied to very much every evil which afflicts the world.

The pattern of a more dignified intellectual dialectic lifts the literature of indignation to new levels. Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* is the classical example of social wrath turned into brilliant argument. And it is a matter of very great importance that literary criticism which a generation ago leaned toward hedonism has in our time felt the compelling power of the vast wave of indignation against social injustice which moves so forcefully through the world. Bernard Smith's *Forces in American Criticism* is a striking example of criticism turned into a vehicle of social indignation. And Parrington's popular books perpetually ignore elements of good in our American past for the sake of dramatizing elements

of evil. They are written in a mood of perpetual repentance for the misdeeds of our ancestors from the founding fathers to the present. In quite another fashion the same mood has entered into theology. Turning from the superficial optimism which has become so shabby a tinsel to all serious thinkers, the psychopathic theologians have so blackened human nature that without a miracle in every specific case there is scarcely anything good left in any man to which God can speak. So, mighty and corrosive indignation runs riot in the world.

It is important to see very clearly a contrast between the indignation of an earlier period and that of our own. Anger did not dominate *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. There were passages of almost lyrical beauty in that widely read book. Anger did not dominate the writings of Jacob Riis. In one of his best known books he tells of coming out of an evil place where he had found amidst the debauchery something so good that he thanked God that he was alive. Abraham Lincoln hated slavery but he found the central motives of his action in loyalty to the Great Republic. In the earlier period men *used* their indignation and *lived* by their faith in some positive good. In our time many of our most effective writers and influential leaders are so busy with their indignation that they have forgotten their faith. Sometimes they are so busy finding evil things to hit that they fail to see elements of good right before their eyes. Some times they are so afraid that the recognition of anything useful and worthy in the present social order will betray us that they deliberately tell lies for the glory of that apocalyptic wrath which is to destroy the evil of the world. Sometimes they come to be like the man from whom the devil had been cast out. He was *empty*. And so he offered hospitality to eight prowling devils for whom he provided a home. Always the men obsessed by suspicion find their perspective clouded. They work uneasily with other men. Since the coming of peace ten thousand suspicions of the West have risen to darken the intelligence of Russian leaders in their dealings with the nations with whom they were allied during the war. They are paying the price which men must pay when indignation had a large part in the founding of the order to which they are devoted. It is an old, old story. There are always backward looking men in America who can never forget the ancient indignation with which the thirteen colonies broke away from England.

Now three things ought to become clear. First, in so far as indignation is justified we must keep our hold upon the ugly facts which inspired it. The evils must not be denied. They must not be covered over. They must be faced honestly and be set forth for the seeing of men with complete clarity. For instance, we must never allow our fear of the disintegration of society to make us patient with evils

which rot the very fibers of the social organism and we must tell the truth about these evils wherever they are found. When labor was weak and was not allowed to organize, the dark chapters were written on the capitalistic side. Now that labor organizations have become powerful they are tempted to exercise a tyranny not less loathsome than that of unethical capital. And sometimes they do. We must not save our indignation for any one social group and overlook the evils placidly accepted by another. By all means let us make the most of our indignation. But let us face all the facts. Most of us have been annoyed (to indulge in a triumph of understatement) at the behavior of representatives of Russia in recent months. Of course, we are going to tell the truth about what we dislike. But the man would be singularly blind who refused to face the fact that Russia is not without reason for being suspicious of the West. The truth about that must be told, as well as the truth about our reasons for suspecting Russia.

Secondly, we will never help the cause of goodwill and justice in the world by refusing to acknowledge elements of good in any imperfect society. When we so hate any social order that we can see no good in it we simply allow our indignation to emasculate our intelligence. And we begin the long ugly process of seeking arguments to support a position rather than of seeking truth with intelligence and of accepting the position which truth once found demands. We simply cannot live by indignation alone, for useful as indignation is, as a weapon, it completely confuses the mind when it is not checked and modified by the quest for truth. Every form of social organization—the tribal, the feudal, the monarchical, the republican and each of the others—has contained elements of good which must be recognized and carried on in the new order when the old is replaced. Otherwise the life of man on this planet becomes a tale told by an idiot signifying nothing. But further, we ought to be able to see, unless we are merely blind utopians, that any society created by man will contain elements of evil against which it will be necessary to protest, as well as elements of good which must be maintained. To refuse to recognize elements of genuine good in the present order is to court disaster, when the new order for which we are working reveals its inevitable weaknesses. In other words, it is men like Abraham Lincoln rather than men like William Lloyd Garrison—useful and important as men of Garrison's type have proved themselves to be—who can be trusted with the future of the world.

The capacity to see the good in the men you dislike and the institutions you dislike is of almost tragic importance as a part of the equipment of the men who are to deal with the present international crisis. There has been cause enough for indignation. And no one who thinks clearly and soundly would

deny that those responsible in their moment of lustful power for the darkest deeds of the totalitarian states must be punished. No one who thinks with understanding would deny that the nations which accepted such leadership must be disciplined as well as guided in better ways. But here again indignation is not enough. The true statesman will seek out the elements in German thought and culture capable of being made a part of a good life for mankind. He will seek the elements in Japanese life and culture which can be gathered up into the life of civilized men. He will not allow his indignation to become an obsession of psychopathic wrath.

Thirdly, as individuals and as nations we must learn to live by what we love rather than by what we hate. We must reach a spot beyond indignation in order to do our best and most productive thinking. To be sure, it is a moral love which is to be at the basis of our deepest loyalties and moral love always has implicit in it the capacity for moral wrath. It will never lead to peace conferences of the lambs to appease the lions. But its emphasis will be positive and not negative. The very indignation will be for the sake of something which is beyond and above indignation. There is an instrumentalism which as a philosophy of life has robbed those who have held it of any basis for deathless loyalties and of any sure foundation in permanent standards. There is a philosophy of education which, as Sir Richard Livingstone has been insisting in books whose importance is by no means indicated by their size, has taken away from those who have followed its behests that without which life has no secure and permanent meaning. The belief in the goodwill which dwells eternally in the mind and the nature of the living God and which is the goal of the life of man, is the fundamental faith by which we must live and in the light of which all our decisions must be made. And as more and more our thought and our imagination give place to passionate devotion to this good which lives in God and in every age has had its witness among men, the ultimately deadening power of indignation unconnected with living loyalty is changed to the driving force of a great faith. In the light of this central loyalty we have keen eyes for the good which has brought light to a relative world and a deeper understanding of the very evil which we must hate and which we must destroy. A famous Mexican artist has painted a picture which might well be entitled *The Christ of Hate*, and as you look upon the features of the mighty figure of incarnate wrath, at the very moment when you see all the justification for the anger you say to yourself with deep conviction, "Indignation is not enough." And you come to see as you think deeply that the men and the nations who live by their central faiths rather than by their peripheral ferocities have the good future of the world in their hands.

## Communication

Dear Sir:

I've just finished reading the article by Richard M. Fagley on "The Atomic Bomb and the Crisis of Man," also the editorial comment, in the last issue of *Christianity and Crisis*. And I confess that, like many other similar articles appearing in both the religious and secular press, it has me considerably agitated. But it also has left me feeling again pitifully helpless. At the risk of being misunderstood, I want to say that it is quite proper, after making clear the gravity of the situation, to say, "Let us, therefore, in our weakness and ignorance seek God's strength and light. Let us in our churches and in our homes seek, in all humility, His guidance for our world, our nation, our churches and ourselves in this fateful time. Spiritual power alone can cope with atomic power."

But that, frankly and in my humble opinion, isn't enough. If ever there was a time for forthright, decisive action on the part of the Christian Church, then this is it. Unless we are being misinformed by those who ought to know about the destructive potentialities of the atomic bomb, then surely this IS a crisis. . . .

What appears to be essential is that the Church should make its voice heard not only in the churches, homes and communities of this and other nations, but in those counsels of governments where this terrifying problem must finally be solved. Let, therefore, representatives of the churches, and I am thinking now of ministers in particular, come together and pray and work over this problem until something effectual is accomplished. The atomic bomb is not to be used. That is the problem. And that is the end of it. This is the time for Christians literally to hold the world together.—FRED W. NIEDRINGHAUS.

### Niemoeller Returns to Berlin Parish

Pastor Martin Niemoeller returned to his former parish in Berlin for the first time since his arrest by the Gestapo on July 1, 1937. Dr. Niemoeller and his wife motored from Stuttgart, where the Council of the Evangelical Church of Germany held its first full meeting since the German surrender.

At a session of the Council of Twelve, governing body of the Church, the office of director of relations with foreign churches was officially created, and Dr. Niemoeller received the appointment.

Technically, Dr. Niemoeller is still pastor of the Church of Jesus Christ in Berlin, but he will not continue this ministry since his new duties with the Evangelical Church of Germany will require his residence in the neighborhood of Frankfurt.

Election of Dr. Niemoeller as a Bishop of the Evangelical Church of Germany is expected in the immediate future, according to church circles around Stuttgart. (RNS)



# The World Church: News and Notes

## Christian Reconstruction in Japan

The first gift earmarked for Japanese relief and "Christian reconstruction" came from an infantry outfit in France.

A \$100 check sent by the Airborne Christian Church of the 327th Glider Infantry has been received by Protestantism's Church Committee for Relief in Asia, Fred Atkins Moore, CCRA's director, announced.

In revealing the receipt of the gift, Mr. Moore also made public the letter from Chaplain Newton G. Cosby of the 327th:

"'Love your enemies' has been ringing in our hearts for some time. We were eager to do something about it. If the money can't be put to work right away, use it at the earliest opportunity."

Mr. Moore said CCRA would do everything in its power to carry out the wishes of the soldiers and declared the committee is now receiving substantial funds for aid in Japan. "The committee had decided to spend an initial \$50,000 aiding Japanese Christian communities," Mr. Moore announced.

## Christian Deputation Goes to Japan

With the official approval of President Truman and General MacArthur, a deputation of four high ranking Protestant church leaders left New York on October 19th by plane for Japan, to confer with representatives of the Japanese Christian Community on the common tasks of the churches of the two nations during the period of reconstruction, and to study the relief and rehabilitation needs of the churches in Japan.

The deputation, which has been assured by Japanese Christian leaders of their welcome in that country, includes Dr. Douglas Horton of New York, Chairman of the American Committee for the World Council of Churches; Bishop James Chamberlain Baker of Los Angeles, Chairman of the International Missionary Council; Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk of New York, Executive Secretary of the Department of International Justice and Goodwill of the Federal Council of Churches; and Dr. Luman J. Shafer of New York, Chairman of the Japan Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference.

## Pope Urges Women to Take Active Part in Public Life

Women everywhere must take an active part in public life, vote to preserve peace, and protect their homes from inroads of totalitarianism and capitalism, Pope Pius XII declared in a world-wide radio broadcast.

The Pope's address, regarded as his most important pronouncement on the place of women in society, was made before an audience of 2,000 Catholic Action leaders in the spacious Hall of Benedictions.

Admonishing Italian women, who will soon vote for the first time, the Pope declared:

"In your social and political activity, much depends on the legislation of the state and the administration of local bodies. Accordingly, an electoral ballot in the hands of a Catholic woman is an important means to-

ward the fulfillment of her strict duty in conscience, especially at the present time."

Women's political role is of the utmost importance today, the Pope said, because good and just women can "direct ideas, dissipate prejudice, clarify obscure points," and apply themselves to matters "which call for tact, delicacy, and maternal instinct rather than administrative rigidity." (RNS)

## French Canadian Protestants Meet

Under the chairmanship of John R. Mott, a meeting of French Canadian Protestant ministers was held in Montreal on September 6th. The general problems of the relationship of Protestantism to Catholicism in this predominant Catholic Canadian Province were considered, and also the special problems which face French Canadian Protestants. A strong emphasis was placed upon the fact that French Protestantism can only survive and progress in Quebec, if it keeps both the French culture and language. The Protestant Churches of Canada were called upon to give greater consideration to the problems of Protestantism in Quebec.

## Aspects of Christian Thinking Discussed

The National Council of Churches of New Zealand was held in the Christchurch of New Zealand, with an attendance of 200. The most significant developments in the meeting were that cleavages of opinion ran across denominational lines and not in conformity with them. Prepared reports on five different aspects of Christian thinking as related to the nation and to the world were the bases of the discussions. A conference on Faith and Order has been planned for 1947.

## German Church Joins World Council

The Evangelical Church of Germany has joined the World Council of Churches, it was announced from Stuttgart at the first assembly of the church's newly-created twelve-man council.

The Council was informed that a statement will shortly be issued from the World Council's headquarters in Geneva discussing the present status of the German Church. It was drawn up in collaboration with Pastor Martin Niemöller and reportedly will contain a realistic appraisal by German churchmen of problems affecting relationships with other countries.

Meanwhile, a delegation of World Council leaders in Stuttgart for the Council assembly invited representatives of the German Church to visit Geneva headquarters as soon as conditions permit. Headed by Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the World Council, the delegation included: Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, general secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America; Dr. Alphons Koechlin, president of the Swiss Federation of Churches; Prof. Hendrick Kraemer of the Netherlands Reformed Church; Col. Marcel Sturm, head of religious affairs of the French occupation zone in Germany; the Rev. Pierre Maury of the French Protestant Federation; Dr. Sylvester C. Michelfelder, commission of the American Section of the Lutheran World Conven-

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tion; and the Rt. Rev. G. K. A. Bell, Anglican Bishop of Chichester.

The foreign churchmen were welcomed by Bishop Theophil Wurm, who voiced appreciation of the World Council's decision to assist in every way possible in the re-Christianization of Germany and in European relief.

Dr. Visser 't Hooft, replying for the delegation, expressed gratitude of the Christian world for the heroic stand of the German churches in defense of their Christian conviction and worship.

"The whole fellowship of the Church badly needs the continuing witness of the German Church," he declared. He added that certain questions and obstacles to fellowship exist in churches abroad which need to be discussed in fraternal conversation.

"Christians the world over," declared Dr. Visser 't Hooft, "say to German Christians, 'Help us to help you.'"

The arrival of Dr. Bell was delayed for several days because of bad flying weather. The Bishop, who is in charge of the Church of England relationships with foreign churches, brought a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury to Bishop Wurm expressing appreciation of the development of church life in Germany, and sympathy over the material distress with which the German Church is now contending. (RNS)

### Religious Affairs Section of Berlin Military Government Has Its Woes

Repair of damaged church buildings for winter services is one of the most urgent concerns of the Education and Religious Affairs Section of the American Military Government in Berlin, according to Captain

Paul F. Shafer, Los Angeles educator who is chief of the section.

Plans have been made to repair two Roman Catholic and two Protestant churches in each of the six districts in the American Zone of Occupation, but it is doubtful if any churches will be allowed even temporary repairs this winter.

Military installations receive top priority, followed by hospitals and schools. Churches and dwellings are next on the list. Supplies are lacking, however, even for the first category. An important telephone exchange and a vital gas plant here still are roofless.

Some of the smaller denominations have suffered the loss of all their property. Nothing has been done for the Christian Scientists whose six churches were destroyed, largely because no leadership has arisen to get action from the harassed city and occupational officials.

Week-day religious instruction in the schools presents a burning issue in Berlin at the moment. Captain Shafer said American officials "have not wanted to press the Germans into a policy" on the question.

Under the Weimar Republic, four lessons weekly were allowed on school time for the first eight grades. The Nazis reduced the program to two weekly lessons for the first seven grades and one for the eighth grade.

In the opinion of a RNS correspondent, greater service could be rendered to Christian forces in Germany, in their efforts to re-educate a people from Hitlerism, if the American Military Government would establish a separate office for Religious Affairs. (RNS)

### Christian Ministers Ask for Jewish Palestine

Demands that Great Britain open the doors of Palestine to the homeless Jews of Europe, and that the British Labor Government fulfill its pledge of a Jewish Palestine immediately, were voiced by speakers at a ministers' luncheon, held under the auspices of the American Christian Palestine Committee, which sponsored a three-day Conference on Palestine at the Hotel Commodore. The first meeting was held Monday, October 15th.

The gathering, consisting of approximately 300 leading Christian clergymen of the Greater New York area, heard addresses by Senator Owen Brewster (R., Me.), Dr. Carl Hermann Voss, co-director of the American Christian Palestine Committee, and Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, executive director of the Committee on Army and Navy Religious Activities of the National Jewish Welfare Board. Dr. Henry A. Atkinson, general secretary of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, was chairman of the session, and the invocation was delivered by Dr. Guy Emery Shieler, editor of *The Churchman*.

### Authors in This Issue

*The article on the situation of the Jews in Europe by the Protestant Chaplain is published anonymously for obvious reasons.*

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